

We Are All Arkansans:

Making a Case, Amplifying Voices, and Building Capacity for Immigration and Immigrants in Arkansas



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Overview: WRF and Immigration in Arkansas

The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation's (WRF) grantmaking to support immigrant integration is rooted in our social justice mission to improve the lives of **all Arkansans**. WRF has an abiding belief in fair and equitable treatment for all. The Foundation supports and partners with key organizations committed to immigrant integration to:

- Eliminate barriers to citizenship and increase the number of citizens in Arkansas
- Build leadership voice and capacity for advocacy and to promote public policy
- Encourage grassroots involvement of immigrants
- Create greater understanding of the need for federal and state policy reform



Through policy **influence**, partner **leverage**, and direct **impact** WRF has used grantmaking and other philanthropic tools for immigrant integration. Over the past decade, the Foundation and its funder and grantee partners have:

- Funded nonpartisan, nationally-recognized research on the economic and demographic impact of Arkansas's immigrant community.
- Invested early in nonprofits like the **Arkansas United Community Coalition (AUCC)**, Arkansas's first statewide immigrant advocacy organization with 150 organizers in 17 communities.
- Secured nearly half a million dollars in local and national funding to respond to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). In 2 years, 7 nonprofits reached 39,574 individuals, assisted over 5,000 people with DACA, and 405 applicants for permanent residency.
- Amplified the voices of immigrant community members and nonprofit leaders through our **"We Are All Arkansans"** and **"40 Years, 40 Leaders"** video series.
- Gave capacity and program support to Catholic Charities Immigration Services (CCIS) as they created a formal partnership with AUCC, created new immigrant resource centers, increased legal services, and increased civic engagement throughout the state.
- Provided technical assistance and support to the **Northwest Arkansas Workers Justice Center** as it campaigned against poor working conditions and immigrant wage theft.
- Supported the only nonprofit led and operated by Marshallese individuals in Arkansas to complete a stakeholder-driven community assessment and strategic planning process.

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WRF's Influence: Making a Case for Supportive Policy

Without good data, policymakers cannot make informed decisions. Research builds an economic case for thriving immigrant communities in Arkansas. Our state's foreign-born population is growing rapidly and is an outsized presence in our workforce, schools, and communities. Select examples of WRF's support for research, data, and policy recommendations are listed below:

- **2007 and 2013 Immigration Reports:** In 2007, and again in 2013, WRF funded statewide studies of Arkansas's foreign-born residents and related policies. The 2013 edition, WRF's [Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas](#), examines the demographics of the state's entire immigrant population, economic impact, and the unique barriers faced by the Marshallese community. This research has been nationally recognized, and WRF has used the report locally to testify on challenges and opportunities surrounding immigration.
- **Juan González:** In 2015, WRF organized and provided support for a [community conversation](#) and [radio interview](#) with author, broadcast journalist, and investigative reporter Juan González. During his stay, González discussed his book, *Harvest of Empire*; regional growth in Latino immigration; and the roles of philanthropy, institutions, and individuals in immigrant integration.
- **Global Talent - The Economic Engine of Northwest Arkansas:** In 2016, WRF supported a partnership between EngageNWA, New American Economy, and Welcoming America to study the regional impact of immigrant and refugee communities. [Their report](#) examines the effect of immigration on Northwest Arkansas based on spending, taxes, labor, and education. This partnership brought together stakeholders and city leaders to identify challenges and opportunities.
- **2017 In-State Tuition Report:** This year WRF commissioned a cost analysis report on the opportunity to provide tuition equity to undocumented residents at Arkansas's public colleges and universities. This report found that as one of 23 states without tuition equity, Arkansas may be losing economic and fiscal benefits these students would bring to the state.

WRF's Leverage: Amplifying Voices

WRF investments support and expand immigrant leadership development, advocacy, community organizing, and defense for laborers across the state. Select examples are listed below.

- **Arkansas United Community Coalition (AUCC):** WRF invested in AUCC during its infancy in 2011 to help launch its Change Agents program. With WRF support, AUCC trained first and second generation Arkansans to organize, manage volunteers, collaborate nationally, and conduct community surveys and workshops. The organization, led by [Mireya Reith](#), AUCC founder and director, has since expanded to 150 organizers in 17 communities.
- **Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center (NWAJWC):** Since 2007, WRF has provided grants and technical assistance to NWAJWC to campaign against wage theft,

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implement a new strategic plan, and improve organizational effectiveness. With WRF support, NAWAJC has doubled its annual budget, expanded organizationally and geographically, hired a new director, developed community leaders, and published a major report, *Wages and Working Conditions in Arkansas Poultry Plants*, in partnership with Oxfam America.

- **Hispanic Women’s Organization of Arkansas (HWOA):** In 2012, WRF gave a \$114,000 grant to HWOA to advance education for Hispanic women and their families, to celebrate and share culture, and to promote civic engagement. With WRF’s support, HWOA diversified funding and earned accreditation from the Board of Immigration Appeals. HWOA’s presence as a leadership developer, and its respected founder and director, **Margarita Solórzano**, have made it a powerful organizer in the community of Springdale and allowed it to amplify immigrant voices through strong relationships with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, local policymakers, and the Arkansas Governor’s office.



- **We Are All Arkansans:** In parallel to WRF’s 2013 *Profile of Immigrants*, the Foundation commissioned a **series of videos** for its annual report. This series highlighted the diversity of immigrants in Arkansas and provided a platform for individuals to share their stories of how they came to Arkansas, invested here, built lives and businesses, and are creating powerful and positive benefits for their communities.

WRF’s Impact: Building Capacity

WRF is strengthening organizations and building regional infrastructure and support for immigrants in Arkansas. The Foundation leverages partners, investments, and movements for prosperous and inclusive communities. See selected examples of WRF’s capacity building:

- **Hispanic Community Services, Inc.:** WRF first provided funding to **Hispanic Community Services Inc. (HCSI)** in 2013 and 2015 to develop strategic plans and expand engagement in the community and region.
- **Delivering on the Dream:** Over two years, WRF provided \$250,000 to develop infrastructure and services for immigrants in Arkansas. WRF leveraged these grants to secure an additional \$224,375 from the **Delivering on the Dream (DOTD)** initiative led by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). This fund supported seven Arkansas nonprofits who served nearly 40,000 individuals and provided over 1,400 with legal support for residency and citizenship. Applications in Arkansas for **Deferred Action for Children Arrivals (DACA)** nearly doubled, from 4,500 to 8,200, in the first year.
- **Catholic Charities Immigration Services (CCIS):** through multiple DOTD grants and a \$100,000 program- and capacity-building grant, WRF assisted CCIS in Northwest Arkansas as it co-located and coordinated services with AUCC, and in Central Arkansas

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as it increased staffed legal services and partnered with Interfaith Arkansas to expand its reach.

- **El Zócalo:** In 2016, WRF used two opportunities for staff-approved, quick-turnaround grant dollars as part of its Capacity for Change program to support **El Zócalo Immigrant Resource Center**. Through just \$6,000 in small grants, El Zócalo piloted a cultural market fundraiser in Little Rock, provided training for staff and volunteers, launched its first Client Advisory Board, and traveled to learn best practices from local and national organizations.
- **Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese (ACOM):** Arkansas is home to the **second highest population of Marshallese** in the United States. ACOM is the only nonprofit led and operated by Marshallese in Arkansas. Through a \$30,000 Capacity for Change grant, ACOM and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences are taking on some of the challenges identified in WRF's *Profile of Immigrants*: civic engagement, health disparities, and educational attainment. ACOM has started to conduct a community assessment of Marshallese residents and creating a stakeholder-driven strategic plan.

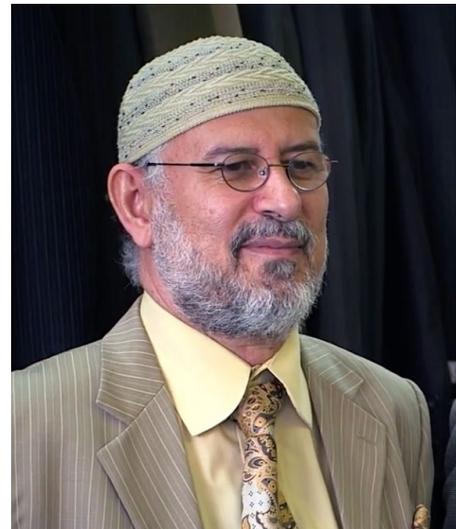
Conclusion

The Foundation has used its entire philanthropic toolbox to strengthen nonprofits and achieve better outcomes for immigrants. Non-grant support, like convening and technical assistance, have forged connections between organizations. WRF has used its voice to amplify immigrant stories and advocacy. Grants, from small capacity-building to multi-year investments, have increased ability and created stability for people and organizations.

NWAWJC received its first independent audit because of a WRF grant. Arkansas's first statewide immigrant-organizing nonprofit, AUCC, exists because WRF invested early in its leadership. Regional immigrant organizations came together to draw on nearly half a million dollars in national and local funding because WRF and its board acted quickly to respond to an opportunity.

WRF paid for research and convened stakeholders to inform the **Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas**. Because of the Foundation's investments, our state has good data readily available for policymakers, funders, nonprofits, and community leaders. A growing yet reachable immigrant population makes Arkansas a laboratory for philanthropic investment. Philanthropic partnerships here can see measurable impact, and change at a statewide level is attainable.

WRF and other grantmakers will continue to **make a case** for supportive and welcoming public policies. We will continue to **amplify voices** through leadership development and advocacy. We will continue to **build capacity** through partnerships and investment in individuals and



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organizations. We will continue to move the needle in Arkansas, so that our state begins to match our vision for it: a thriving and prosperous Arkansas that benefits **all** Arkansans.